

Affordability Committee Notes

January 23, 2007

Present: Pat Hanberry, Nicole Hoff, Amy Gunnarson, Leigh Joss, Ken Eidel, Sarah Penna, Leigh Joos, Helen Monk, Phillip Killam, Carol Antoniewicz

Regrets: Maria Shuck, Guy Djoken, Irka Fallas, Pat Rosensteel

Presentation by Glenn Schneider, Director of Md. Citizens' Health Initiative

Glenn gave a history of the "Health Care for All" movement in Maryland, started in 1999. They have built a coalition of over 1,100 organizations including businesses, unions, faith groups and organizations that support affordable health care for all Marylanders.

Successes include:

- Fair Share Health Care Act: Though this was struck down by the courts, it has pressured Wal-Mart to improve employee health benefits.
- Passage of bill to allow uninsured folks to buy prescriptions at Medicaid prices.
- Making health care a big issue in Maryland. Speaker of the House of Delegates Mike Busch has announced a goal of cutting the numbers of uninsured in half this year.

Current goal: Healthy Maryland Initiative - \$1 increase in tobacco tax to fund coverage for parents up to 100% poverty, help small businesses, reduce health disparities, provide specialty care and addictions treatment. The governor and several legislators are sponsoring various health reform measures. Our voices will be especially needed in the Senate.

Learn more at www.healthcareforall.com ; call 1-866-433-8451

Email glenn@healthcareforall.com to arrange a presentation to other groups.

Actions:

- **Pat Hanberry** will contact the Frederick and/or Western Md. delegation to see if they will meet with us on this issue, most likely on a Wednesday morning in Annapolis. We can educate them re local issues and specific reform measures we support. WE NEED THE TOBACCO TAX. Perhaps show them the 12 minutes video from "Faces of the Uninsured."
- We can draft a sample email for voters to send to legislators in early February, listing principles we support, e.g. do it this year! \$1 increase in tobacco tax; use Medicaid to expand coverage to get Federal matching funds; require everyone to have coverage, offer affordable options; help businesses.
- **Helen Monk** will check whether this can be a topic on her Cable 10 show, Health Matters.

Other:

- Copies of Sarah Penna's new book "Faces of the Uninsured" were shared, includes a video of some of the 300 people she interviewed. View the video at www.healthcareforall.com or purchase book/video for \$20.
- Interim Coordinating Committee (ICC) is planning a large full-coalition March meeting.
- Community Action Agency was awarded a \$350,000 grant to expand their health clinic, to serve folks making 200% poverty or less (\$40,000/yr for family of 4). The school-based clinic was not funded. The good news is both Board of Ed and County Commissioners had approved a possible clinic.
- Sarah confirmed she is stepping down as chair. Someone is needed to chair meetings.
- Next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday, February 27, 7 pm at Abilities Network.

Respectfully submitted by
Carol Antoniewicz